



AETC News Clips

Randolph AFB, Texas



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Damage to military bases near \$1 billion

Saturday, September 10, 2005; Posted: 8:39 p.m. EDT (00:39 GMT)



Sailors assigned to the dock landing ship USS Tortuga search flooded New Orleans neighborhoods for survivors.

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WASHINGTON (AP) -- Military housing, airport hangars, equipment and power lines were heavily damaged at six military bases across Louisiana and Mississippi, forcing nearly \$1 billion in emergency repairs, according to base personnel and other defense officials.

A Navy facility in New Orleans is partially flooded and all but essential personnel are still evacuated. Hurricane winds and heavy rain slammed other bases, but many are up and running now.

Several bases in the region -- particularly in Florida -- received little to moderate damage, and did not have to evacuate. There have been no reported military casualties.

A federal base closing commission had voted earlier to shut down one of the damaged bases, Naval Station Pascagoula, as well as the inpatient care facility at the hard-hit Keesler Air Force Base. It is unclear how possible future closure of those facilities, both in Mississippi, would affect any repair plans.

Although Defense Department officials say they still have no exact estimates of damage for most of the facilities, the Pentagon is getting \$1.9 billion in the two supplemental budget packages for Hurricane Katrina relief. Of that, \$960 million is for initial emergency repairs, engineering assessments and power restoration at the bases.

Meanwhile, members of Louisiana's 256th Brigade Combat Team who were most affected by the hurricane are beginning to arrive home from Iraq, and most of the unit should be home in the next two weeks. Army Brig. Gen. John Basilica Jr., commander of the unit, said Friday about 800 of the troops volunteered to work with the relief effort in the region, while about 1,500 will return to their civilian jobs.

The brigade, which numbers about 2,500, had finished its duties in Iraq but the return flights have been expedited, particularly for those most needy, he said.

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At Gulfport Naval Station in Mississippi, one of the hardest hit bases, about 400 Seabees -- members of naval construction battalions -- were brought in immediately after the storm to remove debris, clear road, get generators working and begin repairing roofs and other building damage.

"Our wind speedometer broke," said Navy Capt. George Eichert, who rode out the storm with about 1,250 Navy personnel and families in a sturdy warehouse on the Gulfport base. "We had 100 mile-per-hour winds for four-plus hours with gusts up to 150. I would characterize the damage as heavy, but not catastrophic."

He said several metal buildings on the base and some electronic training equipment were destroyed and will have to be replaced, and all the roofs had some type of damage from wind and fallen trees. But most of the base personnel have returned to work.

At Pascagoula, two Navy frigates and one cruiser were moved to safer seas, and won't be brought back to the base for a while because the waterways have to be cleared and navigational devices need to be replaced, said Navy spokesman Bill Dougherty.

Two New Orleans naval facilities were heavily damaged, but sailors at Naval Air Station New Orleans got the airfield cleared and flights have been going in and out of the base all week with supplies. Most of the planes were flown out before the storm, but some aircraft and equipment that remained at the base were damaged, according to Navy spokesman Lt. j.g. Sean Robertson.

The east side of the Naval Support Activity base in New Orleans, however, is still underwater, and the west side was torn up by heavy winds and rain. There is still no power and only essential personnel are on the base.

About two dozen aircraft were moved from Keesler Air Force Base, which received extensive damage, as floodwaters rose to about 4 feet. And there were flooding and fallen trees at Homestead Air Force Base in Florida.

As many as 1,600 Army soldiers and staff rode out the storm at Camp Shelby, near Hattiesburg, Miss., where much of the military's Joint Task Force Katrina has been based. The 136,000-acre base is a training facility for the National Guard and active duty troops who are preparing to deploy overseas.

Base spokesman Lt. Col. Doril Sanders, who was there during the storm, said one soldier received a minor injury and hundreds of trees were uprooted, damaging buildings and pulling down power lines. Much of the power was back on by Thursday, and training is continuing.

In addition to the \$1.9 billion, the Pentagon is expected to get about \$2.5 billion to cover orders that the Federal Emergency Management Agency has made through the Defense Department, such as contracts to use several ships as emergency housing for evacuees.

Included in the \$1.9 billion is:

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- \$450 million for pay and allowances for 44,000 National Guard members who have been mobilized for the Hurricane Katrina response.
- \$240 million for evacuation costs, including temporary lodging and travel, for up to 44,000 military members and their families.
- \$130 million for military family support services, including comfort kits, relocation of child care facilities and grief counseling.
- \$120 million for travel and other costs to support the National Guard.

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When the levee breaks

Text by Michael Cary

Photos by Mark Greenberg

09/08/2005

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When the levee breaks



Robert Danfield, a New Orleans native, tries to get a last glimpse of his devastated hometown as he and his family are airlifted in a C-130 cargo plane to Ellington Field in Houston. Danfield's wife, Deborah Glenn, was in desperate need of dialysis for a kidney disease. The family was rescued from the attic of their house in the 8th Ward.

SA military, medical teams pluck family from chaos

New Orleans native Robert Danfield stared balefully out of the airplane's small porthole, a row of parachutes hanging above on the bulkhead, and glimpsed a final view of his hometown. As a 9-year-old in 1965, he had lived through Hurricane Betsy; 40 years later, he and his family barely survived Hurricane Katrina. "The grace of God is what got us out."

As the passengers boarded the airplane, the air overhead buzzed with rescue helicopters that landed by the twos and threes every 30 seconds at the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport,

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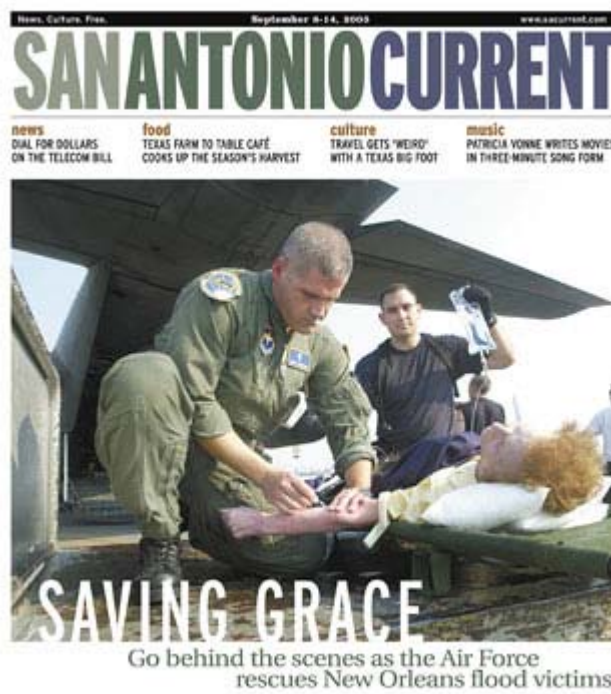
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unloading hundreds of people who were plucked out of their attics, from rooftops, and hard-to-reach high ground in the Crescent City.



Major James Johnson, a cardio-thoracic anesthesiologist stationed at Wilford Hall, inserts an IV saline pouch to a critically ill patient before she is loaded aboard an Air Force C-130 cargo plane, bound for Ellington Airport in Houston. The patient ultimately would receive treatment at an area medical facility.

The C-130's engines roared and the aircraft vibrated underfoot. A medical technician distributed earplugs to weary residents who had only hours earlier been rescued. The plane smelled metallic, like a set of keys held too long in a sweaty palm.

The 25 passengers who could walk were strapped into red, webbed seats designed to carry paratroopers, and they sat subdued. Air Force medical crews hooked up intravenous saline pouches and attached blood pressure monitors to the critically ill patients those with tuberculosis, kidney failure, or sickle cell anemia who were strapped into 20 stretchers rigged along the spine of the plane.

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Members of the 452nd Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron from March AFB in California load medical equipment aboard a C-130 transport in the early morning hours at Lackland AFB. The crew's mission was to airlift critically ill and other patients out of Louis A. Armstrong International Airport in New Orleans after a massive helicopter airlift operation was launched last week.

Danfield patted his nervous wife on the knee as if to reassure her that they were leaving the chaos of New Orleans, where thousands were still being rescued from their attics and rooftops. Although the death toll hasn't been calculated, city officials estimate thousands of people died during the week that passed since Katrina stopped the heartbeat of the city.

Nine months ago, Danfield, 50, moved into a newly mortgaged home near Franklin Avenue with his wife, Deborah Glenn, and his stepdaughter, Heather. Their three-bedroom home in the New Orleans' 8th Ward is located about midway between Lake Pontchartrain and the Mississippi River.

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Major Stacia Belyeu checks the medical condition of a patient on a stretcher in the passageway of the Louis Armstrong International Airport in New Orleans. Belyeu was part of a crew from 452nd Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron at March AFB, California, that accompanied an airlift mission to New Orleans last weekend.

When Hurricane Katrina bore down on the Gulf Coast on August 28, Danfield's family was among the 20 percent of New Orleans' 480,000 residents who did not evacuate. Relieved that the eye had veered to the east of the city, they went to bed feeling safe in their home.

But, Danfield, says, about 6 a.m. Monday, Heather awoke from a dream that her family was in danger. Later that morning, floodwaters breached a levee on the 17th Street Canal, and Lake Pontchartrain flowed into the 8th Ward, engulfing most of the homes.

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Like scores of residents, the family became trapped in the attic by the rapidly rising floodwaters. To escape, Danfield knocked a ventilation fan out of the roof. He broke off a PVC pipe and used it to fly a white T-shirt through the hole to signal any would-be rescuers. But the disaster had just struck New Orleans, and few had arrived to rescue the thousands who were suddenly stranded.

Fortunately, Danfield had a flashlight, and that night he used it to send signals into the darkness with the thin hope that help would come. On the afternoon of August 30, rescue workers from Coast Guard and National Guard units pulled the family to safety and delivered them to the New Orleans Convention Center, where, Danfield says, they stayed in “pure hell” for the next three days. Thousands were stranded at the facility without food, water, electricity, medical care, or law enforcement.

Now Danfield confronted a bigger problem. Glenn suffers from kidney disease, and without crucial dialysis treatment, her health was rapidly deteriorating. Danfield decided he needed to move his family to the Superdome, where he thought his wife would more likely receive medical care or be evacuated.

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Military personnel and volunteers from other agencies help load critically ill patients onto a C-130 cargo plane for transport to air bases in Houston and San Antonio. The operation was part of Joint Task Force Katrina, established to provide relief to thousands of New Orleanians stranded in the Crescent City after it was devastated by Hurricane Katrina.

So, on September 2, the family traversed the one-and-a quarter miles from the Convention Center to the Superdome. "We waded through water up to our waists, past dead bodies, to get to the Superdome," Danfield says. There the waiting began anew.

As the Danfields were settling into the Superdome hoping to find medical help for the ailing Glenn, in San Antonio, aircraft were departing Lackland Air Force Base every 45 minutes to rescue sick and injured New Orleans residents who had been transferred from the Superdome to Armstrong Airport, where military forces had set up the largest triage center in United States history.

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At 4 a.m. on September 3, a five-person medical crew at Lackland Air Force Base with the 452nd Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron joined an Air Force flight crew from Arkansas, which had been put on alert Thursday night. The crew loaded medical gear onto the C-130 cargo plane. The crew included nurses, technicians, and an additional three-member Critical Care Air Transport Team, including Major James Johnson, a cardio-thoracic anesthesiologist, Captain William Wolfe, a critical-care nurse, and Sergeant Sybyl Thibodaux, a critical-care technician, all from Wilford Hall Medical Center's 59th Medical Wing. At 6 a.m., the pilot lifted the aircraft off the runway and sped into the predawn, set to arrive at Armstrong Airport less than two hours later. The seven-man flight crew and the medical teams were taking help and hope to thousands of severely traumatized New Orleans residents.

The crew landed at 7:50 a.m. and taxied to the D gates, where people lay on stretchers in the middle of the airport concourse. They had been rescued, processed through triage, and were queued up for the many medical evacuation flights that would occur until everybody was in medical facilities in Texas or other states. Complicating matters, rescue airplanes and evacuation helicopters had to share one runway, because the remaining tarmac at Armstrong Airport were eroded by floodwaters.

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A scene from outside Armstrong Airport in New Orleans, where the sick and injured were airlifted to hospitals throughout the U.S.

"We're going to Ellington," said Major Stacia Belyeu, the nurse in charge of the aeromedical evacuation team. Ellington Field is a former military airport that Houston now maintains, 15 miles south of downtown.

Rodney Christa of San Antonio was the chief master sergeant in charge of evaluating patients, many of whom were rescued from nursing homes and hospices. He is assigned to the 433rd Airlift Wing at Lackland. Since August 31, he said, "we worked until we couldn't, 16 hours on duty, four hours to sleep."

Christa said his airport troops were dealing with people whose needs differed from the wounded who arrive from Iraq and other battle zones. "There are things we haven't seen before. If I don't move fast enough, people will die. If mom is sick or injured, we're moving the whole family."

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The scene inside Armstrong Airport resembled a hospital critical-care unit, except that uniformed troops stood guard, lounged in airport gate waiting areas, or slept on the floor during off-times. Other troops helped with patients, patrolled the concourse and entrances, or prepared MREs, the military's prepackaged meals.

The airport terminal was littered with duffel bags, and other troop gear. The building was lit and air-conditioned by a generator with air blowing through ducts in the entryway. Foodstuffs and other relief supplies sat in stacks adjacent to medical triage areas roped off to keep TV camera crews away from the patients that lined the passageways. Outside the airport terminal, misery and chaos reigned among the young and old who squatted among the refuse, trying to get into the airport and out of New Orleans.

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On the tarmac, the flight team revved the motors of the C-130. The evacuation crews had loaded the 20 patients on stretchers and 25 more who could walk.

"Tell CNN these people are not refugees," said Belyeu. "They are Internally Displaced People, or IDPs. Refugees leave the country."

In Houston around noon on Saturday, Danfield and Heather walked off the airplane alongside Glenn, who was pushed in a wheelchair across the tarmac to a terminal where hundreds of relief workers and medical personnel had set up an intake area. Glenn soon received her life-saving dialysis.

The C-130's four powerful engines revved again, and the airlift crews boarded the cargo plane for another flight to New Orleans to pick up 40 patients who would be evacuated to Lackland. Johnson, Williams, and

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Thibodaux lay back in the webbed seating in the aircraft's cargo hold for some much-needed rest before they landed again in New Orleans.

"We'll go back to New Orleans, but not to live there again," Danfield said as he smoked a cigarette and pondered his family's future. He dialed numbers on his cell phone, trying to reach relatives in Houston. "I have no identification, no credit card; not a nickel in my pocket. We've just got to start over we're thinking about staying in Texas." •

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Panel's final report shells the Pentagon's base closure plan

Web Posted: 09/10/2005 12:23 AM CDT

Gary Martin
Express-News Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — A Pentagon plan to close hundreds of military installations overestimated savings by \$30 billion and failed to recognize military value of key facilities, an independent panel said Friday in a final report to the president and Congress.

Of the 190 facilities the Pentagon wanted closed, the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission spared 24, amended 45 recommendations and left 119 decisions intact.

The base closure commission pulled Red River Army Depot in East Texas from elimination, but agreed to close or realign the Ingleside Naval Station, Brooks City-Base in San Antonio and the Lone Star Ammunition Plant in Texarkana.

"We reached our decisions through open, fair and nonpartisan process," said Anthony Principi, chairman of the panel commonly referred to as BRAC.

"While we listened carefully to the input from the local communities, military value was our top priority," Principi said.

Military industry analysts said the 2005 base closure panel gave more weight to the economic impact of closing a base than did panels in four previous rounds.

"This commission showed far more compassion than one we've seen previously," said Paul Taibl with Business Executives for National Security.

The Pentagon proposed closing 33 major military bases as part of the plan, which it estimated would save \$48.8 billion over 20 years.

The BRAC panel approved 21 of those recommendations, but spared large facilities like Ellsworth AFB in North Dakota, the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Maine and a submarine base in New London, Conn.

Overall, the BRAC panel approved 86 percent of the Pentagon proposals, for a savings of \$35.5 billion.

"We appreciate what the commission has done. It's a tough job and it's a good step toward ensuring that the final recommendations increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our military structure," said Glenn Flood, a Pentagon spokesman.

Flood said the Pentagon would now "conduct an analysis and offer our insights to the president. The process is not over yet."

The BRAC panel submitted its recommendations to President Bush on Sept. 8. By law, the president has 15 days to accept, or reject the list and return it to the commission for revision.

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Rep. Solomon Ortiz, D-Corpus Christi, urged Bush in a letter this week to send the list back to the BRAC commission and ask it to reconsider the issue of Gulf Coast security in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

The panel agreed to close Ingleside and Pascagoula Naval Station, the only two Navy facilities located on the Gulf Coast.

Both are being used in rescue and recovery efforts following the hurricane.

Taibl said the request was unlikely to alter the process.

"That is an issue that could be handled in some other way. It doesn't require the whole BRAC effort to be derailed," Taibl said.

Bush told Texas reporters last month that he would accept the BRAC recommendations as presented, to avoid the appearance of politicizing the process.

Once the president agrees with the panel's findings, the list then goes to Congress, which has approved recommendations in four previous rounds in 1988, 1991, 1993 and 1995.

According to the BRAC report, the Pentagon's proposed savings in its base closure recommendations were overstated by \$30 billion because the 26,800 military personnel at the installations were shifted to other facilities and not eliminated.

Without eliminating the personnel, the cost savings totaled \$19 billion.

The commission also questioned the effectiveness of closing military bases while the Pentagon is conducting its Quadrennial Defense Review, a four-year exercise to determine needs and military strategy.

BRAC commissioners recommended another round of closures in a decade, but suggested that it follow, not precede, the QDR to effectively shape the military to its needs.

Retired Brig. Gen. John Jernigan, who led a San Antonio military task force, agreed with the panel that closing bases should come after the review of force structure.

More BRAC decisions coverage

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Despite the decision to pull Air Force operations out of Brooks, San Antonio fared well in the base closure process. The military will consolidate medical training at Fort Sam Houston and locate a regional medical complex at Brooke Army Medical Center, bringing 9,000 additional personnel.

Ortiz was instrumental in getting the BRAC panel to insert language in the nonbinding report that would urge the Navy to move some jet training to Kingsville Naval Station if two other options at Naval Station Oceana Virginia and in Florida can't accommodate the mission.

Meanwhile, legal battles over proposals to close and realign Air National Guard bases and assets threaten to tie the process up in federal court.

Several states have sued the Pentagon over recommendations that impact Guard facilities, and federal courts in Tennessee and Connecticut have issued injunctions that prevent BRAC decisions from being implemented.

"This is going to bounce back and forth in the courts for awhile," Taibl said.

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Tons of international aid flown in to Air Force base

BY KATHERINE MARKS ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Planes from Russia, Egypt and Israel touched down at Little Rock Air Force Base on Thursday carrying tons of baby food, prepackaged meals and other humanitarian aid for victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Since Monday, such flights have become routine at the base near Jacksonville, the hub for all international aid being sent for hurricane victims. On Thursday, two Israeli planes carrying enough baby food to feed 30,000 infants arrived at the airport. Egyptian and Russian planes also delivered goods.

Base spokesman Lt. Jon Quinlan said that 934 tons of cargo had been delivered by Thursday morning.

As of Thursday afternoon, 23 flights from other countries had arrived at the base and nine more were expected over the next few days, Quinlan said.

Cargo planes arriving at the base have also carried international aid from Belgium, Britain, China, France, Italy, Spain and the West Indies.

A Russian plane carrying British cargo sat on the tarmac Wednesday as aircrews unloaded tons of prepackaged meals and water. Hours later, a Chinese plane touched down, carrying children's clothes and household goods.

"Relief support is coming in from our international partners and I'm sure we'll get it to the people that need it," 314th Airlift Wing Commander Brig. Gen. Joseph Reheiser said. He added that he's not sure how long planes will continue arriving at the base bringing aid.

The size of the base and its proximity to areas ravaged by the hurricane, which inundated New Orleans and left a path of destruction along the Gulf Coast, made it an obvious choice as a hub, Reheiser told Chinese and local media on Wednesday.

He called the flight from China historic and said the situation itself is unique.

"Usually, we're on the other side of this," he said of the aid planes.

Reheiser said the base is sticking to its training schedule for C-130 flight crews, but that some people in office jobs at the base were helping with the logistics for the relief flights.

Quinlan said base aircrews had flown 26 missions, which included evacuations and cargo deliveries, in support of the relief effort. Thirty-seven personnel from the base are deployed for Joint Task Force Katrina.

On Wednesday, a group of Chinese delegates was on hand to watch its relief plane arrive. Before it landed, Hu Yeshun, the Chinese consul general based in Houston, said the donations were a show of sympathy and support. The Chinese government also contributed \$5 million in aid money and its citizens have donated to private charities supporting the relief effort, Hu said.

"At such a moment, the whole world should stand together," he said.

The plane, which made a scheduled stop in Anchorage first, carried 100 tons of cargo. The clothes and household goods were stacked on pallets, which were wrapped in plastic and marked with the words "China donation" and the Chinese flag.

The United States has accepted offers totaling nearly \$1 billion in aid from about 95 countries, a State Department official told The Associated Press.

Some countries have said that they haven't received official approval to deliver aid. Swiss officials said they are still waiting to deliver water-purification units, blankets and mobile-network equipment. Officials from Poland, Austria and Norway also told The Associated Press they had not heard back from U.S. officials on their offers.

State Department officials have said they have communicated with all countries who have offered help.

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LRAFB designated international hub for Katrina relief



WARREN WATKINS

INTERNATIONAL AID for hurricane Katrina survivors arrived on this Air Africa International DC-8 cargo plane. The historic flight landed Sept. 5 at Little Rock Air Force Base.

By **Warren Watkins**

Staff writer

Nations around the world are stepping up to help America recover from Hurricane Katrina, with the first planeload of supplies arriving at Little Rock Air Force Base Monday, Sept. 5.

The plane, from Brize Norton air base in Oxfordshire, England, carried 1.5 million cases of Meals Ready to Eat, containing 10 meals each. The food is already cooked and can be eaten cold if need be.

"We're very proud of it," said Flight Engineer Christophe Legros, speaking in his English accent. "We're proud of doing something useful for people."

The flight took 10 hours and weighed 37,210 metric tons. The food will be loaded onto up to 50 trucks and shipped south to hurricane survivors. The first shipment was British, and French and Italian food is to follow. Over the next two weeks, 15 more flights are scheduled at a rate of up to six a day.

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Relief efforts have been organized as Joint Task Force Katrina and includes government agencies working together.

Little Rock Air Force Base has already flown 19 missions in support of the effort, and has a number of personnel and planes dedicated to it.

Some of the first planes to land at Louis Armstrong International Airport in New Orleans were from the base, including one of the first C-130s, which was loaded with runway lights so night operations could be conducted.



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The Albuquerque Tribune **Offers of foreign aid pour in**

Europeans bring needed staples, gear
By ASSOCIATED PRESS
September 6, 2005

BRUSSELS, Belgium - European nations have prepared aid teams, food rations, water pumps and even cruise ships to help U.S. regions hit by Hurricane Katrina.

Countries large and small have offered aid - from tiny Luxembourg's beds and blankets to half a million food rations from Germany and Britain.

Greece put on standby two cruise ships to house refugees and Sweden has offered aircraft to help distribute aid shipments, said Barbara Helfferich, a European Union spokeswoman.

Helfferich said an EU aid coordinator would go to the United States soon to help ensure aid goes to victims of Katrina in Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi. U.S. authorities made a rare request for help from Europe during the weekend, asking for anything from diapers and baby formula to forklifts and veterinarian supplies.

Aid flights from overseas will be directed to Little Rock Air Force Base in Arkansas, unloaded there, and have the material sent to the affected regions to the south, said Air Force Lt. Jon Quinlan.

"We've contracted semitruck drivers to drive the cargo to the Gulf Coast starting tomorrow," Quinlan said.

The first plane with food rations arrived Monday from Britain and was unloaded in preparation for the seven-hour drive to New Orleans.

"The United States has been enormously grateful for the outpouring of support both emotional and concrete from allies over the past week," said Victoria Nuland, the U.S. ambassador to NATO.

NATO officials said the alliance was coordinating offers of food, shelter and other aid from several allies, including Germany, Canada and Norway, which was offering navy divers, as well as 10,000 blankets. Latvia and France were preparing to send disaster relief teams.

Non-NATO members were also working with the alliance's disaster coordination center, including Switzerland and Russia, which has offered generators, tents and 10,000 meals.

Germany and Britain had already sent 570,000 emergency food rations during the weekend, while Luxembourg was preparing to send a team of five aid experts, two jeeps and bedding. The Netherlands had deployed a naval frigate, which was bringing drinking water, medical supplies and much needed helicopters.

Many European countries have pledged to release parts of their strategic oil and gas reserves to stabilize global oil supplies.

Bangladesh, an impoverished south Asia delta nation regularly buffeted by cyclones and floods, pledged \$1 million and offered the services of rescuers and disaster experts.

A Mexican ship loaded with supplies set sail Monday from the Gulf Coast port of Tampico, and the country has set up consular offices in trailers around the disaster zone to help some of the estimated 140,000 Mexicans who live in the region, 10,000 of them in New Orleans.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said last week no aid offer would be refused.

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AETC News Clips

Little Rock AFB, Ark.



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Relief goods from China arrives in US



LITTLE ROCK AIR FORCE BASE, Sept. 7 (Xinhuanet)-- A total of 104 tons of relief aid from China arrived Wednesday afternoon at the Little Rock Air Force Base in Arkansas, the United States, on board a Boeing 747 airplane.

The relief materials provided by China include tents, light power generators, bedsheets and clothes.

The US side extended warm welcome to the arrival of the aid. "Welcome our People's Republic of China friends" and "Thanks for your support" were written in electric bulletins around the air base.

Commander for Little Rock Air Force Base, General Joseph Reheiser, greeted at a civil airport in Little Rock China's Consul General at Houston Hu Yeshun, who arrived here to receive the cargo plane.

Reheiser told Xinhua, "It (the airlift)'s quite unusual. I'm not a historian, but I can't think of a time when China has airlifted relief supply to the United States. I think it's a historic event and we're very appreciative that China has done it."

The Federal Emergency Management Agency would arrange cargo trucks and see to it that the relief materials be sent to the stricken areas, he added.

Hu said the airlift showed deep sympathy and condolences of the Chinese Government and people to the American people who have suffered a severe natural disaster.

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

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General Reheiser had expressed the hope for increased exchanges between the armed forces of China and the United States, apart from the efforts to boost the governmental and non-governmental exchanges between the two countries, said Hu.

According to General Reheiser, Little Rock Air Force Base has been the sole distributing center for international relief materials for the victims of Hurricane Katrina, which ripped through the southeastern part of the United States on Aug. 29 and inflicted heavy casualties and damages.

So far, the base has received 14 air cargos loaded with relief materials from Russia, Spain, France, Italy, Britain and other countries, said General Reheiser, adding that another 13 dispatches of relief aid are expected to pour in the next two days.

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

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AETC News Clips

Luke AFB, Ariz.



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EDITORIAL

W. Valley has no time to rest on its laurels

Our stand: Luke has been spared closure, but there's more work to do

Arizona escaped this round of military base closings and consolidations with only a minor casualty — the Air Force Research Lab in Mesa is slated for relocation to Ohio. With it will be the loss of as many as 465 jobs, both direct and indirect, at the lab, which has an economic impact of about \$74 million in the East Valley.

Left virtually intact were the state's five major bases, including Luke Air Force Base in Glendale and its annual economic engine of \$1.4 billion.

That's the good news.

But it would be foolhardy to let down our guard, become complacent and think that Luke's superb flying weather and its proximity to the Goldwater Gunnery Range will always be sufficient to insulate the base from major change.

Peoria Mayor John Keegan, one of the West Valley's most knowledgeable leaders on the military and who tirelessly has worked to protect Luke, is worried about the implication of two decisions of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, whose recommendations now go to President Bush and Congress.

"Just because the BRAC process is almost over, we can't let down our resolve," Keegan says.

He's right. The worst thing that West Valley leaders could do is to think the worst is over and stand pat on policies or weaken land-use restrictions around Luke.

The two decisions cited by Keegan are:

- The commission gave Virginia and the municipal governments of Virginia Beach and Chesapeake one last chance to enact and enforce legislation to halt the encroachment of the Naval Air Station Oceana and to purchase property in the accident potential zones, among other mandates. If it does not by March, the base's F-18 operations would be moved to Cecil AFB in Florida.

- The commission overruled the Pentagon proposal to shut down Cannon AFB in Clovis, N.M., opting to keep the base open until 2010. It's an operational base for F-16s, one of three in the



Jack Korte/The Arizona Republic

Communities around Luke Air Force Base must work on stopping encroachment.

nation, while Luke is the training base for F-16 pilots. Curiously, the commission decided to transfer Cannon's F-16 fighter planes, creating what Keegan calls "a base without a mission."

Whether these decisions could be a precursor for what happens to Luke remains to be seen. Obviously, Luke has encroachment problems — problems so severe that it had to close the Northern Departure Corridor to jets with live ordnance. In recent years, new land-use restrictions that dictate the types of development permitted in the noise contours have been hailed as models for bases elsewhere.

But what government giveth, government can taketh away.

And it's not a secret that Cannon, with no encroachment problems, has an interest in taking over some of Luke's responsibilities.

The West Valley, indeed Arizona, is committed to Luke and the rest of its military installations and has adopted good policies, from land-use restrictions to purchasing farmlands near the bases.

Those actions have helped preserve Luke's mission and likely were selling points for the BRAC Commission. But there doesn't have to be a BRAC process to shut down a base.

That is why this is no time to rest on laurels. It is a time for continued vigilance and to commit human capital and resources to preserving Luke.

Keegan puts it well: "I think we have a lot to celebrate as the BRAC process winds up. But the one thing we can't do is assume the job has been done."



John Keegan

The Arizona Republic

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